

National Human Rights Institutions and the 2018 Talanoa Dialogue: showcasing that climate action should be human rights-based

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National Human Rights Institutions and the 2018 Talanoa Dialogue

Showcasing that Climate Action should be Human Rights-Based

Information

The Talanoa Dialogue on Climate Ambition organised throughout 2018 in the context of the UN climate negotiations offers a significant opportunity for all stakeholders, including National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), to frame climate ambition and action in the context of human rights and the principles reaffirmed by the Paris Agreement: the rights of indigenous peoples, gender equality, the promotion of food security and a just transition, protecting ecosystems integrity, and public participation in decision-making.

This informational note provides an overview of the Talanoa Dialogue on Climate Ambition and identifies existing opportunities for NHRIs and other stakeholders to provide input into the process. It offers guidance on how information about the importance of integrating human rights into climate action can be fed into the Dialogue. NHRIs are invited to use the Talanoa process to contribute examples from their work that have a clear link to climate change.

At a glance

What: In 2015, state parties to the Paris Agreement decided to convene a facilitative dialogue in 2018 to raise the ambition of climate action by taking stock of progress made towards the objectives of the Paris Agreement and by informing future national climate commitments. Fiji is in charge of facilitating the preparatory phase of the Dialogue (up to the end of November 2018). It has decided to rely on the Pacific tradition of ‘Talanoa’ to foster consensus based on sharing stories and mutual listening while avoiding finger pointing.

Why: Given its participatory process and its focus on framing our understanding of climate ambition, the Talanoa Dialogue is particularly useful to promote a collective understanding that human rights are critical for effective climate action in the form of mitigation, adaptation,

and loss and damage activities and policies. The Dialogue can contribute to integrating human rights into the implementation guidelines currently negotiated to operationalise the Paris Agreement.¹ The guidelines will be adopted at COP-24 in December 2018.

Who: The process is open to any actor (state and non-state) with relevant input or expertise. There are no institutional requirements for NHRIs and civil society actors to engage in the Dialogue. Contributions must, however, comply with the Talanoa methodology and be verifiable through the provision of the name and e-mail/telephone number of participating organisation.

How: To increase chances that inputs by NHRIs and civil society actors are considered

and reflected in the reports resulting from the Dialogue they should be in line with the Talanoa methodology. Thus, inputs should: emphasise real stories, good practices, and/or positive experiences learned through challenges; highlight how human rights and associated principles can enhance future climate actions; and put forward clear, concise, and actionable inputs. It is imperative to use positive wording and examples,

and to avoid naming and shaming. The three guiding questions to structure the Dialogue are: (1) Where are we now? (2) Where do we want to be? (3) How do we get there? Three templates are provided to facilitate inputs. They should be submitted online via the Talanoa Dialogue Platform before 29 October 2018. All inputs will be considered by the Fijian presidency as it will prepare a final report of the contributions received.

Raising climate ambition in 2018

At the 2015 Paris Conference, state parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) decided to convene a facilitative dialogue in 2018 to raise the ambition of climate action through two objectives:

- Taking stock of collective progress made towards the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement;
- Informing the preparation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to be submitted by all state parties in 2020.

The Talanoa Dialogue is facilitated jointly by the Fijian COP-23 presidency and by the Polish COP-24 presidency. In a decision supported by other state parties, Fiji has decided to hold the Dialogue on the basis of the Pacific tradition of ‘Talanoa’ – an approach used by Pacific islanders

to reach inclusive, participatory, and transparent decisions through consensus by building empathy on the basis of sharing stories rather than through adversarial negotiations between groups. Fiji has stressed that inputs provided must aim at promoting constructive and respectful discussions without finger pointing. The Dialogue is structured along three guiding questions:

- Where are we?
- Where do we want to go?
- How do we get there?

Additionally, the two presidencies have encouraged state parties and non-party stakeholders to cooperate in convening local, national, regional, and/or global events in support of the Dialogue. Such events have taken place outside the formal UNFCCC process since May 2018.

Entry points for NHRIs and civil society actors



The Talanoa Dialogue was launched in January 2018 and will conclude during the COP-24 in Katowice in December 2018. It is structured as a staged approach, offering multiple opportunities for state parties and other stakeholders to give input.

January–April: preparatory phase

During the first part of the preparatory phase, any actor – including both, state parties to the UNFCCC and other institutional or civil society actors – regardless of observer status to the UNFCCC – had the opportunity to provide

inputs online through the Talanoa Dialogue Platform.

Until 2 April 2018 over 200 submissions were made, the majority coming from non-party stakeholders, and are accessible on the Talanoa Dialogue Platform (except for a few submissions rejected by the Fijian presidency as it considered some contribution not to be in line with the Talanoa approach). The Fijian presidency prepared a report highlighting overall trends and statistic, including the need to dramatically increase the scale and pace of climate action and to use synergies

between climate action and existing frameworks, such as the Agenda 2030 or the Sendai Framework. The report highlights links between climate vulnerability, poverty, and development. It includes suggestions of how to promote human rights-based climate action, sustainable development and poverty eradication. Civil society submissions particularly focused on providing information about the situation on the ground, influencing the design and mechanisms of international climate action and encouraging a wider debate and call for action.

April–May: sessions of the UNFCCC bodies with in-session dialogues

The second stage of the Dialogue took place during the climate negotiations in Bonn in May 2018, particularly through six dialogue groups to promote in-depth discussions using the Talanoa approach. Each group included a Fijian facilitator, up to thirty state representatives and five representatives of non-state stakeholders (including NGOs, intergovernmental organisations, business/industry, cities and indigenous peoples). The groups came together for three successive sessions to address each guiding question of the Talanoa Dialogue.

The results of the in-session dialogues were summarised in a report. It mainly includes technical questions regarding the implementation of the Paris Agreement and highlights the need to take steps before 2020 to initiate its implementation. This includes formulating nationally determined contributions (NDCs), with which each state party to the Agreement shows what actions it will take to reduce national greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impact of climate change. The report also emphasises the need for increased cooperation of all relevant stakeholders. The in-session dialogues provided an open and inclusive space for such cooperation, bringing together different actors, including businesses, youth, gender groups and indigenous peoples, to exchange their experiences and ideas on future climate action.

May–October: second part of preparatory phase

The preparatory phase of the Dialogue will continue until 29 October 2018 and state parties as well as non-state stakeholders will be able to provide inputs via the online platform until then.

During this phase, two events will play an important role in shaping the narratives around climate ambition.

First, the Global Climate Action Summit (San Francisco, 12–14 September 2018) will focus on the role of non-state actors (first and foremost businesses and local/regional governments) in combating climate change. Secondly, on 7 October 2018 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) will release a special report dedicated to “the impacts of global warming of 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways”. This will include a Climate Science and Humanitarian Dialogue at the UN in Geneva on 12 October 2018.

Additionally, a series of Talanoa-related events will continue to take place, including dialogues of the East Asia Air Quality Forum in South Korea; the U20 mayoral Summit in Buenos Aires; the Climate Alliance International Conference in Spain; and the International Conference on Climate Change, Biodiversity, and Regional Agreements in Mexico. Other dialogues will focus on the private sector including the Natural Capital Partners and ECOHZ Talanoa Dialogue in Copenhagen and the nexos+1 event in Peru.

These decentralised events offer additional opportunities for NHRIs and their regional networks to share their perspectives. The Fijian presidency will prepare another report based on the additional inputs received, which will be released prior to the start of COP-24.

December 2018: political phase

The Dialogue will conclude with a political phase during the COP-24, held from 3–14 December 2018 in Katowice, Poland. During this phase state parties’ representatives will be brought together to address the two objectives of the Talanoa Dialogue: taking stock of collective progress made and informing the preparation of future NDCs. NDCs will form the basis of implementation plans through which each state defines the level of its commitment and identifies how it will implement its obligations. All parties will have to prepare, communicate and maintain the NDCs on the basis of a successive 5-year cycle.

The modalities for the political phase are not defined yet, though it does appear that the implications of the IPCC special report will be discussed. There is no information yet on the role of non-state actors during the final stage of the Dialogue.

Providing input to the Dialogue

The modalities for the first three stages of the Talanoa Dialogue are more inclusive than the usual UNFCCC process. They provide a real opportunity for human rights actors, such as NHRIs and civil society, to participate meaningfully in the Dialogue. The guiding questions selected by the Fijian presidency allow to reframe climate action in a wider context, not limited to a quantitative assessment of the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Instead, the guiding questions allow NHRIs to push for human rights-based climate action, including the implementation of the principles reaffirmed by the Paris Agreement: the rights of indigenous peoples, gender equality, the promotion of food security and a just transition, protecting ecosystems integrity, and ensuring public participation in decision-making.

When providing input, NHRIs should consider

- putting forward clear, concise and actionable inputs directly addressing one or more of the guiding questions;
- seeking to particularly address the third guiding question, highlighting how integrating human rights can contribute to enhance future climate action
- respecting the Talanoa methodology instead of using a ‘blaming and shaming’ approach to ensure that inputs are not rejected or ignored. This means emphasising real-world testimonies, good practices and/or positive experiences learned from challenges.

More information on the Dialogue

- Talanoa Dialogue Platform: <https://talanoadialogue.com/>
- Talanoa Dialogue – Everything You Need to Know: <https://cop23.com.fj/talanoa-dialogue/>
- High-Level Champions’ letter to non-Party stakeholders: Invitation to provide input to the Talanoa Dialogue: https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/9fc76f74-a749-4eec-9a06-5907e013dbc9/downloads/1c79cps38_40785.pdf
- Overview of the inputs to the Talanoa Dialogue prior to 2 April 2018: https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/9fc76f74-a749-4eec-9a06-5907e013dbc9/downloads/1cbos7k3c_792514.pdf
- Summary of the Talanoa Dialogue at the May 2018 session: https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/9fc76f74-a749-4eec-9a06-5907e013dbc9/downloads/1cgc07t0q_77988.pdf

¹ For more information please check our brief about the Implementation Guidelines and how National Human Rights Institutions can ensure to integrate human rights in the Guidelines. Deutsches Institut für Menschenrechte (2018): National Human Rights Institutions and the 2018 UN Climate Conference: Incorporating Human Rights in the Implementation Guidelines of the Paris Agreement.

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